



## WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

## AND RESEARCH NOTES

No.	AUTHOR: W. Adam Phelps, Waterfowl Research Biologist	DATE
	TITLE: 2008 Light Goose Conservation Order in Indiana	
965		9/15/2008

**Abstract:** *The light goose conservation order was available statewide in Indiana from 1 February to 31 March 2008. All participants were required by state law to obtain a free permit. An estimated 160 participants pursued light geese for a total of 333 hunter-days in Indiana from 1 February to 31 March 2008, harvesting an estimated 155 light geese. Light goose harvest in Indiana during the 2008 conservation order decreased by 87% from the 2007 conservation order period. The most common comments from participants were not knowing where to hunt and having limited opportunity on light geese.*

### **Regulations**

The light goose conservation order was available statewide in Indiana to residents and non-residents from 1 February to 31 March 2008. Shooting hours were from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. There were no daily bag or possession limits. Shotguns capable of holding more than three shells and electronic calling devices were legal. All participants were subject to the same regulations applied during the regular waterfowl season (i.e., Indiana hunting license, state duck stamp), except that a Federal duck stamp and registration with the Harvest Information Program were not required. In addition to licensing requirements, participants were required to obtain a free permit with an attached pre-addressed, postage paid survey card.

### **Methods**

All participants were required by state law to obtain a free permit. Attached to each permit was a pre-addressed, postage paid survey card to be completed and mailed after the close of the conservation order. Those who did not return their survey card were mailed a second, reminder survey card. No attempt was made to solicit non-respondents after the second survey card was sent.

### **Results**

A total of 782 individuals registered to participate in the conservation order (compared to 194 in 2007) and 468 survey cards were returned (59.8% response rate), of which 96 respondents indicated they participated in the order. An estimated 160 participants pursued light geese for a total of 333 hunter-days in Indiana from 1 February to 31 March 2008 and harvested an estimated 155 light geese. An estimated 11 participants used electronic calls, with an estimated 6 using unplugged shotguns. An estimated 19 participants pursued geese one-half hour after sunset, harvesting only an estimated seven light geese during that time. Efforts to take light geese occurred in 26 known counties; harvest occurred in 11 (Table 1).

### **Discussion**

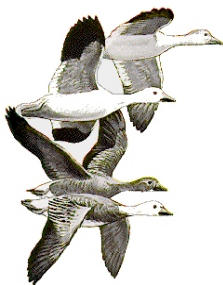
Light goose harvest in Indiana during the 2008 conservation order plummeted from 2007, decreasing by 87% (down from an estimated 1216 harvested birds in 2007). Just a few hunters reported large

harvests last year, which could have falsely increased the harvest estimate. It seems likely that this year's harvest estimate is a more accurate representation of the average light goose harvest in Indiana. The most common comments from participants were not knowing where to hunt and having limited opportunity on light geese. This year, 77% of harvest occurred in four counties in west-central and southwest Indiana (Vermillion, Sullivan, Greene, and Posey). Last year, 98% of the harvest occurred in the three southwesternmost counties in the state; only one of these had significant harvest this year (Posey). This annual variation in effort and harvest (location and level) likely reflects the spotty year-to-year variation in distribution of light geese in Indiana.

Table 1. Reported<sup>a</sup> harvest of light geese by county during the snow goose conservation order in Indiana, 2008.

County	1 – 9 Feb	10 – 23 Feb	24 Feb – 9 Mar	10 – 31 Mar	Total
Adams	0	4	0	0	4
Allen	0	0	0	0	0
Boone	0	0	0	0	0
Elkhart	0	0	0	0	0
Gibson	0	1	0	0	1
Greene	4	3	5	0	12
Hamilton	0	0	0	0	0
Hancock	0	0	0	0	0
Johnson	3	0	0	0	3
Kosciusko	0	3	0	0	3
Lagrange	6	0	0	0	6
La Porte	0	0	0	0	0
Marion	0	0	0	0	0
Marshall	0	1	1	1	3
Morgan	0	0	0	0	0
Posey	2	3	16	2	23
St. Joseph	0	0	0	0	0
Scott	0	0	0	0	0
Shelby	0	0	0	0	0
Starke	0	0	0	0	0
Steuben	0	0	0	0	0
Sullivan	6	4	1	1	12
Vermillion	20	5	0	0	25
Vigo	0	0	0	0	0
Warrick	0	0	1	0	1
Wells	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	41	24	24	4	93

<sup>a</sup> Reflects distribution of reported (not estimated) harvest of light geese.



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